Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 through 20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) A method for generating a configuration record for a network device, the method comprising the steps of:

gathering information from at least one source that uniquely and generically indicates desired capabilities of the network device;

~~obtaining capability-configuration data for the network device, the capability-configuration data including commands that can be used to configure the network device~~;

obtaining actual-configuration data for the network device, wherein the actual-configuration data corresponds to ~~a subset of the capability-configuration data~~ existing capabilities of the network device; and

altering ~~merging the capability-configuration data and~~ the actual-configuration data in accordance with the gathered information so as to generate a ~~into~~ configuration record for the network device;

wherein the configuration record represents a physical configuration for the network device that enables the network device to provide the desired capabilities. ~~is usable to effectuate a desired change in a configuration of the network device by enabling code that is specific to the network device to be generated in response to a generic indication of the desired change.~~

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

storing the configuration record ~~merged capability configuration data and the actual configuration data~~ in a central repository of configuration records.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein obtaining the actual-configuration data for the network device comprises:

retrieving the actual-configuration data directly from the network device.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

storing in a storage location substantially all commands capable of configuring the network device; and

including a pointer in the configuration record that points to the storage location.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

storing a prior version of the actual-configuration data; and

including a pointer in the configuration data to the prior version of the actual-configuration data.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

storing in the configuration record substantially all commands capable of configuring the network device.

27. (currently amended) A method for generating a configuration record for a network device, the method comprising the steps of:

gathering first configuration data from at least one source that uniquely and generically indicates desired capabilities of the network device;

~~retrieving first configuration data for the network device, the first configuration data indicating capabilities of the network device~~;

retrieving second configuration data for the network device, the second configuration data including information about how the network device is currently configured to operate;

generating the configuration record by combining the first configuration data and the second configuration data into a configuration record for the network device,

wherein the configuration record represents a physical configuration for the network device that enables the network device to provide the desired capabilities ~~is usable to effectuate a desired change in a configuration of the network device by enabling code that is specific to the network device to be generated in response to a generic indication of the desired change~~; and

storing the configuration record in a repository of configuration records.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the first configuration data includes commands not corresponding to the current configuration of the network device.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the first configuration data includes CIM data.

Claims 30 and 31 (Cancelled)

32. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the configuration record generically represents the physical configuration for the network device, and wherein the configuration record is usable to effectuate the physical configuration for the network device that enables the network device to provide the desired capabilities by enabling code that is specific to the network device to be generated and sent to the network device in response to the alteration of the actual configuration data.

33. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the configuration record generically represents the physical configuration for the network device, and wherein the configuration record is usable to effectuate the physical configuration for the network device that enables the network device to provide the desired capabilities by enabling code that is specific to the network device to be generated and sent to the network device.